

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: USUAL LEVEL OF NORTHERN IRELAND VIOLENCE

REF: DUBLIN 0343

1. NORTHERN IRELAND VIOLENCE DURING WEEKEND OF BURIAL
FRANK STAGG IN REPUBLIC WAS AT "NORMAL" OR "CEASEFIRE"
LEVEL WITHOUT SIGNS OF CONCERTED PROVISIONAL IRA CAMPAIGN. ONE
FEMALE PASSENGER IN AUTOMOBILE ON MAIN NEWRY/DUNDALK ROAD
KILLED BY GUNFIRE AT HIJACK ROADBLACK SOUTH ARMAGH FEB. 21
AND YOUNG MALE CATHOLIC FOUND DEAD WITH THROAT CUT NEAR SHANKILL
ROAD BELFAST NIGHT FEB. 22. THE SEVERAL BLAST AND INCENDIARY
BOMBS IN PUB AND BUSINESS PREMISES BELFAST AND OTHER BOMBS IN
PROVINCE INCLUDING BOOBY TRAP INJURING POLICEMAN AND TWO CIVILIANS
IN COALISLAND FEB 21.

2. CONVICTION SPREADING IN ULSTER THAT PROVISIONAL IRA
VIOLENCE FOLLOWING DEATH OF FRANK STAGG HAS BEEN RESTRAINED.
THERE GREAT DEAL OF SPECULATION ABOUT REASONS FOR THIS
RESTRAINT BUT LITTLE HARD INFORMATION. QUESTION OF CONTINUING
TALKS BETWEEN NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE OFFICIALS AND PROVISIONAL
SINN FEIN MEMBERS IS ELEMENT THIS SPECULATION. QUESTION
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FIRST RAISED PUBLICLY IN PARLIAMENT BY ENOCH POWELL LAST WEEK.
DENIAL BY SECRETARY OF STATE REES CONFINED TO TWO NEWSPAPER

REPORTS AND SEEMED WEAKENED BY SUBSEQUENT STATEMENT (REPORTED IN NORTHERN IRELAND) BY UNNAMED NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE OFFICIAL STORMOUNT THAT TALKS COULD BE HELD WITH ANY RECOGNIZED GROUP. SEAMUS LOUGHRAN PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN NORTHERN IRELAND ORGANIZER DENIED PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF TALKS BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THEY COULD BE PURSUED WITHOUT HIS KNOWING IT. LOYALIST AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP) POLITICIANS BELIEVE TALKS ARE BEING HELD AND ARE DUBIOUS OF MOTIVES AND SUBSTANCE. MOST COMMON RUMOR IS THAT TALKS BEING HELD TO PREPARE FOR ENDING OF GRANTING SPECIAL CATEGORY STATUS FOR THOSE CONVICTED OF TERRORIST CRIMES AFTER MARCH 1. BOTH REPUBLICANS AND LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES INTEND OPPOSE PHASE-OUT.

3. FINAL AND INCONCLUSIVE TALKS BETWEEN ALLIANCE PARTY AND UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COALITION HELD FEB 19. AND IT WIDELY BELIEVED ALL-PARTY MEETING WITH CONVENTION CHAIRMAN FEB. 23 WILL RESULT IN PROPOSAL OF DATE FOR TERMINAL CONVENTION MEETING. A FEW OPTIMISTS HOPING THAT MIRACLE, SUCH AS INTERVENTION BY PRIME MINISTER, CAN SALVAGE PROSPECTS FOR DEVOLVED INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT HERE BUT THERE LITTLE POLITICAL PRESSURE OR WILL TO BE CONTINUE CONVENTION DELIBERATIONS.

4. IN THIS ATMOSPHERE OF UNCERTAINTY AND UNEASE PROTESTANT PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS EMERGING FROM SELF-IMPOSED SILENCE. UNNAMED SPOKESMAN FOR ULSTER DEFENSE ASSOCIATION (UDA) IS REPORTED AS WARNING LAST LAST WEEK THAT ORGANIZATION WOULD NOT FAVOR CONTINUED DIRECT RULE AND WOULD EXPECT POLITICIANS TO SET UP SOME SORT OF PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT UDA COULD BACK. SOME FIFTY MEN PRESUMABLY PROTESTANTS WEARING PARAMILITARY UNIFORMS AND CARRYING CLUBS MARCHED AND DEMONSTRATED THREATENINGLY IN CATHOLIC AND MIXED AREAS LARNE NIGHT FEB 22. THIS PARTICULAR TYPE OF DEMONSTRATION UNSEEN IN NORTHERN IRELAND SINCE MAY 1974. SPICER

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